

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 001345

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV MOPS TU IZ

SUBJECT: IRAQ: TURKISH PARLIAMENT REJECTS U.S. TROOP
DEPLOYMENT

(U) Classified by Ambassador W. Robert Pearson. Reasons: 1.5
(B) and (D).

¶1. (U) On March 1, in closed session, the Turkish Parliament rejected a motion that would have allowed the U.S. to deploy troops for operations against Iraq. Of the 533 members present, 264 voted in favor and 250 against. 19 MPs abstained. Article 96 of the Constitution requires that an absolute majority of the MPs present support a motion to secure passage.

¶2. (U) Speaker Bulent Arinc adjourned Parliament until Tuesday, March 4. Though there are time limits for the resubmission of law that fail to pass parliament, motions are not subject to such limits. Therefore, it is possible for the GOT once again to bring this motion to Parliament for a vote. Whether the GOT will pursue this option, however, is not predictable at this moment.

¶3. (C) The failure to secure the necessary votes to pass the motion is a serious blow to the AK government -- in particular to AK leader R. Tayyip Erdogan, who had put his prestige as party leader behind the motion's success. Ahead of the vote, the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) had made it clear that its MPs would vote against the motion as a bloc. CHP has 177 members of Parliament and the governing AK Party has 363. We do not yet know the party membership of the 16 members of Parliament who were not present for the vote. Nonetheless, at least 90 AK MPs, or approximately 25 percent of the AK parliamentary delegation, failed to support the government.

PEARSON